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ISSUE 14 | VOLUME 8

Community *notes*

Board of Appeals Seeks Applicants

Applications are now being accepted to fill a vacancy on the County's Board of Appeals. The Board of Appeals is a five-member body appointed by the County Council that hears and decides variances, conditional uses, non-conforming uses, and appeals of departmental or administrative decisions.

To be eligible, applicants must be registered voters and residents of the County. The candidate selected will be appointed to serve a five-year term that will expire on December 31, 2022. The Board meets as needed, typically once or twice each month. For more information about the Howard County Board of Appeals, [visit the County's website](#).

Interested individuals are asked to submit a letter of interest and resume to the Council Administrator, Jessica Feldmark, by email to jfeldmark@howardcountymd.gov by Friday, December 15.

Safety and Security for Houses of Worship

Join the Howard County Police Department on Thursday, December 7, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. to discuss police and civilian response to violence in Houses of Worship. Gain insight to potential threats and hazards that may exist and hear safety tips and best practices for leaders and congregation members. This event will take place at Howard Community College in the Health Sciences building (main level, room #150).

Space is limited so please RSVP at 410-313-2207 or hcpdoutreach@howardcountymd.gov by December 2.

Greetings

'Tis the season for family-friendly events in the County and throughout the region. This newsletter includes some opportunities to celebrate the magic of the holidays and to come together as a community in support of one another.

May Kay

Symphony of Lights

Symphony of Lights is a time-honored Howard County holiday tradition held at Merriweather Post Pavilion. This family-oriented spectacular is a dazzling display of more than 100 larger-than-life animated and stationary holiday light creations, made up of approximately 300,000 bulbs. Over the past 20 years, nearly 2 million individuals have visited the lights, and proceeds from the event have raised more than \$8 million to benefit Howard County General Hospital.



Families can drive through the light displays or attend one of the many special events offered throughout the month. Individuals who attend the event can also participate in a Candy Cane Count [contest](#) for a chance to win prizes, including tickets to Toby's Dinner Theatre or a Merriweather Post Pavilion concert of your choice.

The exhibit runs from November 21 to January 1st, 2018. For a full schedule of events and information on ticketing, please visit this [website](#).

Holiday Mart

Knock out some holiday shopping at the 45th Holiday Mart. Find seasonal gifts and merchandise created by over 130 juried artisans. Enjoy door prizes, horse and carriage rides, and a children's craft corner. Discerning shoppers know this is the place to find unique, handcrafted items and home decor. You're sure to find something for everyone on your list. For more information, visit the [county's website](#).

Home for the Holidays: Coping with Family

Holidays spent with family members who feel toxic can be emotionally draining and even perhaps re-traumatizing. This roundtable discussion presented by HopeWorks will be a space to explore tools and tactics for having tough conversations with difficult family members and for caring for yourself during these challenging moments. Join the conversation on December 13, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. at 9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 300. For more information and to register, please visit [HopeWorks website](#).

Nuts and Bolts: Understanding Financial Aid

The women of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. are hosting a free financial aid workshop for students, parents, and the community on December 5, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. at Wilde Lake High School. This workshop is designed to help attendees understand the process of applying for and qualifying for financial aid, as well as other forms of funding college. To register for the workshop, contact scholarship@zphiblgz.org by December 1.

St. Louis Church Concert Series

St. Louis Church is hosting a Christmas Concert on December 17, 4:00 p.m. with a reception to follow. Enjoy selections from The Nutcracker Suite, Babes in Toyland, listen to your favorite Christmas songs, and enjoy the holiday season. For more information, visit [the concert series' website](#).

Hickory Ridge Breakfast with Santa

Hickory Ridge will hold Breakfast with Santa on Saturday, December 2, 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. at The Hawthorn Center. Enjoy a continental breakfast, a fun holiday craft, and a picture opportunity with Santa. Tickets are limited and may be purchased at the Hawthorn Center. For more information, visit the [village's website](#).

Tree Lighting Celebration

Kick off the holiday season with Howard County's Tree Lighting ceremony on December 5, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. at Centennial Park South Entrance. This evening will have caroling and refreshments, topped off by a magical tree lighting. This event is free and for all ages. For more information call 410-313-7275.



HAL Star Party

Howard Astronomical League (HAL) will hold its final Public Star Party of 2017 on Saturday, December 2, 5:00 - 11:00 p.m. at the HAL Observatory at Alpha Ridge Park in Marriottsville. The Moon will be almost full and will be visible through telescopes set up by HAL members as well as live on a big screen as seen through the observatory's Watson Telescope. See [the website](#) for more information and directions.

Lisbon Christmas Parade

Main Street (Route 144) will be filled with holiday excitement on Saturday, December 9 beginning at noon with the arrival of an array of horses, carriages, wagons and of course, a visit by Santa! Event sponsors ask attendees to bring nonperishable food items to benefit the Howard County and Carroll County Food Banks. For more information, visit the [event website](#).



Coffee with a Cop



Join HCPD officers on Thursday, December 7, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. at the North Laurel Community Center for an opportunity to meet face-to-face with police personnel in a neutral environment to ask questions, voice concerns and get to know officers. As always, coffee and conversation are on the house! For more information contact Community Outreach Division at 410-313-2207.

Women's History Month Essay Contest

The Commission for Women has announced the 2018 essay contest, open to all Howard County middle and high school students. Completed essays are due by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, January 22, 2018. [Download the essay contest flier](#). For full contest rules, [visit their website](#).

Academic Calendar Planning Committee

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) invites citizens to take an active role in developing the 2019-2020 Academic Calendar as members of the Calendar Planning Committee. Members of this committee attend six meetings starting in January 2018 to make recommendations to the interim superintendent regarding the HCPSS academic calendar for the 2019-2020 school year. Meetings are 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. on January 10, 18, 24 and 31, and February 7 and 12, 2018. Meetings are held in Boardroom B at the Department of Education, 10910 Clarksville Pike in Ellicott City.

Citizens interested in participating on the 2019 - 2020 Academic Calendar Planning Committee may submit a statement of interest [online](#) or contact the Office of Administrative Affairs at CalendarCommittee@hcpss.org or 410-313-6679. The deadline for submissions is Friday, December 15.

Give the Gift of Giving

Grassroots Crisis Center: Take a moment to read the [2017 holiday wish list](#). Wish list donated items need to be delivered by Wednesday, December 13 at 6700 Freetown Road in Columbia. Thank you in advance for your donations.

Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland: Support senior citizens in the greater Howard County area by participating in one of their holiday service projects. Details on the projects can be found [here](#). For additional ways to help, visit the volunteer [website](#).

HopeWorks: This holiday season, you can support Howard County's domestic violence shelter by making a donation or volunteering your time at HopeWorks. Take a look at their holiday giving campaign [here](#).

FIRN: Support Howard County's immigrant and refugee families by making a charitable donation to FIRN during the holidays. Make a contribution [here](#) or donate food gift cards, new clothing, and new toys to their holiday program. For more information, call 410-992-1923.

Serve Food on Christmas Day: Give back to a family in need during the holidays by serving food on Christmas Day, or any day this month. For more details, please take a look at VolunteerHoward's [flyer](#) on holiday opportunities and food insecurity.

Project Linus of Howard County: Project Linus provides blankets to children who are seriously ill or traumatized. The organization is looking for donations of hand-made blankets, child-friendly fabrics, acrylic yarn in bright colors, and gift cards to stores like Hobby Lobby, Michael's, Joann's, etc. For more information, please call 410-730-8865.

Healthy Families: Help first-time parents in Howard County access resources to promote stability for their families and prevent abuse by donating diapers of all sizes, baby formula and wipes, or gently used baby clothing size newborn through the age of 5. Call 410-715-3716 for more information.

Pizza with Santa

Harper's Choice village center will host a Pizza Party with Santa on December 16, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. at Kahler Hall. Enjoy pizza, special holiday crafts, face painting and listen to Santa as he reads, 'Twas the Night Before Christmas.' Bring your camera and capture a special family photo with Santa!



Attendees are encouraged to bring one non-perishable food item per ticket for the Howard County Food Bank. For more information, call Melanie Jeffers at 410-730-0770 and visit the village's [website](#).

Upcoming Events

Midnight Madness

Friday, December 1 • 6:00 p.m. - 12:00 a.m.

Old Ellicott City Main Street

Bring the family into town, visit Santa from 4:00 - 8:00 p.m. at the log cabin, watch the tree lighting and sip hot treats while strolling along the picturesque historic district. For more information, visit the [event page](#).

Breakfast with Santa

Saturday, December 2 • 8:00 - 9:30 a.m.

Seasons 52

Santa will visit with youngsters and their families for breakfast this Saturday. Santa will go around and chat with attendees at their tables. Breakfast will include scrambled eggs, bacon, French toast sticks, fruit, juice, milk and coffee. Tickets are \$15. Make reservations by following this [link](#).

Holiday Mart

Saturday, December 2 • 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Gary J. Arthur Community Center

Find seasonal gifts and merchandise created by 130+ juried artisans. Enjoy door prizes, horse and carriage rides, and a children's craft corner. Discerning shoppers know this is the place to find unique, handcrafted items and home decor. For more information, visit this [website](#).

Teen Anxiety; How to Help Your Teen

Wednesday, December 6 • 6:30 p.m.

Atholton High School

Adolescence is a stressful time filled with academic, community and social pressures. To manage anxiety, teens must learn to practice positive emotional resiliency skills rather than avoiding situations that cause stress and developing maladaptive coping strategies. Take part in an open discussion on symptoms, stigmas, and what you can do to help. For more information and to register, follow this [link](#).



Mary Kay Sigaty

mksigaty@howardcountymd.gov

Twitter: [@MaryKaySigaty](#)

Facebook: [facebook.com/MaryKaySigaty](#)

Howard County Council
3430 Courthouse Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21043
(410) 313-2001

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